



ST MARTIN'S CHURCH BARNEHURST

PARISH NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026



Eucharist services each week at 10.30am followed by refreshments

The next non eucharist service will be on 8th February 2026

All services are followed with refreshments

On 2 February the Church celebrates the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, more commonly known as Candlemas. Falling forty days after Christmas, Candlemas marks the point at which the Church's celebration of the Incarnation turns decisively towards the journey that will lead to the Cross and the Resurrection. It is both an ending and a beginning: the traditional close of the Christmas season, and a quiet turning of our gaze towards Lent and Easter. The feast is rooted in the Gospel account from St Luke. According to Jewish law, a firstborn son was to be presented to the Lord in the Temple, and the mother was to offer a sacrifice of purification forty days after childbirth. Mary and Joseph faithfully observe this law, bringing the infant Jesus to Jerusalem. They come, not with the offering of the wealthy, but with "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons", a sign of their poverty and humility. In the Temple they encounter two elderly figures, Simeon and Anna, whose lives have been shaped by prayerful waiting. Simeon, moved by the Holy Spirit, takes the child in his arms and utters words that have echoed through the Church's worship ever since: "My eyes have seen your salvation... a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel. Anna, a prophet, gives thanks to God and speaks about the child to all who are looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. These words give Candlemas its central image: Christ as light. From at least the early Middle Ages, candles have been blessed and carried in procession on this day as a sign that Jesus is the Light of the world, who comes to shine in the darkness. In many parishes, the flickering glow of candles in midwinter has a particular power. As the days are still short and the weather often cold, the symbolism feels immediate and real. The light we celebrate is not abstract or sentimental; it is light that shines in darkness, and "the darkness did not overcome it". Candlemas is also a feast about recognition. Simeon and Anna see in this ordinary-looking baby the fulfilment of God's promises. Others in the Temple that day see nothing remarkable at all. The feast quietly asks us a question: do we recognise Christ when he comes to us, often in humble and unexpected ways? In the cry of the poor, in the needs of our neighbours, in the bread and wine of the Eucharist, Christ is presented to us again and again. There is, too, a note of cost and sorrow in the Candlemas story. Simeon blesses Mary, but he also warns her that "a sword will pierce your own soul **TOO**". The joy of Christmas is not denied, but it is deepened by honesty about what lies ahead. The child who is the light of the world will be rejected; the salvation he brings will come through suffering. Candlemas therefore prepares us spiritually for Lent, reminding us that the Christian journey holds together joy and sacrifice, glory and the Cross. Historically, Candlemas had a strong place in everyday life. Candles blessed on this day were taken into homes and lit during storms or at times of illness, as a sign of prayer and trust in God's protection. While we may no longer live by candlelight, the instinct behind the practice remains meaningful. We still long for signs of God's presence and reassurance in uncertain times. In a world that often feels anxious and divided, Candlemas speaks quietly but clearly. It tells us that God comes not in overwhelming power, but as a child carried into the Temple by faithful parents. It reminds us that waiting is not wasted time when it is shaped by prayer. And it proclaims that the light of Christ is given not to a select few, but "to enlighten the Gentiles" – for the whole world. As we bless candles and hear Simeon's song once more, we are invited to take that light with us. Candlemas does not ask us to stay in the Temple; it sends us out, carrying Christ's light into our homes, our workplaces, our parish, and our community. The days will still be short for a while yet, but the light has come – and it is enough to guide us on the way.

God Bless. Father Gareth

GOSPELS FOR FEBRUARY

1 st February 2026	John 2. 1-11
8 th February 2026	Matthew 6. 25 to end
15 th February 2026	Matthew 17. 1-9
22 nd February 2026	Matthew 4. 1-11

COLLECT FOR FEBRUARY

Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things, now and for ever. Amen

In February we ask you to pray for everyone living or working in Chiltern Close, Cumbrian Avenue, Eversley Avenue, Quantock Road and Vanners Close

We also ask you to remember the following people in your thoughts and prayers. Andrew, Angela R, David B, Elizabeth M, Father Gareth, John M, Joyce P, Julia J, Keith R, Mary P, Neil R, Rob P, and all who are suffering in body, mind and spirit.

If you have any specific prayer requests or an approaching significant special event, please let us know



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St Martin's Players
HUXTABLE HALL, ST MARTIN'S CHURCH,
ERITH RD, BARNEHURST DA7 6LE
present

Snow White

directed & produced by
Sue Adams, Dave Barnett & Wendy Barnett

Fri 30th Jan 7.30pm
Sat 31st Jan 2.30*pm & 7.30pm
Fri 6th Feb 7.30pm
Sat 7th Feb 2.30*pm & 7.30pm

* Pre-booking essential for 2.30pm performances **£8**
BOOK ONLINE: WWW.stmartinsplayers.co.uk
BOX OFFICE: **07539 351646** CONCESSIONS **£5**
There will be Interval Refreshments and a Raffle, CASH ONLY

PLANT SALE AND SPRING FAIR
SATURDAY 25 APRIL 10AM - 12PM

ST MARTIN'S CHURCH ERITH ROAD, DA7 6LE

**RAFFLE
TOMBOLA
CAKES
SOFT TOYS
LUCKY BAGS
BOTTLE TOMBOLA**

**TEA & COFFEE
BOOKS & JIGSAWS**

ST MARTIN'S CHURCH MONTHLY DRAW - £1 Per ticket
Email: stmartins.monthlydraw@gmail.com

Drawn on Sunday 25th January 2026

£25 (no 126) Julia Jamieson £10 (no 34) Sandra Elbrow
£5 (no 5) Jean Baldwin £5 (no 149) Richard Storey

COME AND JOIN US AT OUR 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION ON SATURDAY 16TH MAY 2026

FULL DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
ST MARTIN'S IN 2026

CAMEO (MU)
The next meeting is on Monday 9th February at 1.30pm in the Maxim Room.

CHILDRENS SOCIETY
The final amount sent to the Childrens Society after Christmas was £560 increasing the total raised in 2025 to a massive £1,154. Well done St Martin's

COFFEE SHOP – every Tuesday in the Maxim Room from 10am to 12pm POSTAGE STAMPS AND PRINTER INK CARTRIDGES - Please keep saving these. Collecting boxes are in the church and hall **GARDENING**
WORKING PARTIES - If you can help to keep our grounds tidy please contact Phil: Philip.church@virgin.net
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX MASS St Martin's welcomes Bexley's Ukrainian residents as they hold mass each Sunday from 1pm to 3pm. The mass is in Ukrainian and is led by an Orthodox Priest or Presbyter